

ISSUE OF THE LIFE IMPRISONMENT

SUMMARY

This diploma thesis engages in the issue of life imprisonment sentence. Today, life imprisonment is the toughest possible punishment the criminals are facing in our country. As such, this role is also reflected in the extraordinary position which the life imprisonment assumes.

Until 1990, the year of its abolition, the toughest penalty applied many years in the Czech Republic used to be the capital punishment. Once abolished, it was replaced by the life imprisonment. Throughout my paper I am addressing the question as to the suitability and legitimacy and whether this alternative is appropriate and legitimate.

The thesis is structured in seven chapters. The introduction deals with the general questions regarding the purpose of a punishment and an overall description of imprisonment as a sentence. One of the chapters that follow details the historical development of life imprisonment in our country. In order to get a better picture of this juridical institute, I have also included a chapter on legal provisions applicable in other European states. Another chapter confronts the life imprisonment with basic human rights and with punishment principles. The chapter number seven forms an important part of the paper as it documents a summary of results of the biggest study carried out so far among convicts sentenced with life imprisonment.

Like the capital punishment, the life imprisonment also is supported by many and objected by plenty. In the conclusion of my thesis, I am trying to evaluate the pros and cons of life imprisonment and also indicate the drawbacks it has in the current legal provision.

Having reviewed all facts, I have concluded that life imprisonment is a legitimate legal sanction and that it is a suitable alternative for capital punishment.